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Human Rights Council
Thirty-fifth session
6-23 June 2017
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Souke Gender Justice Network, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1 June 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.17-09516(E)

Please recycle

Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: Engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls

Recommendations
MenEngage Alliance

1. It is suggested interventions explicit references to gender transformative approaches and to position this language as the basis for all the suggestions for the implementation of strategies, programing, education, policy reform and campaigns discussed therein. Going beyond the need to merely engage men and boys, a transformative framework would include consistent mentioning of the need to "address root causes" and to transform "social norms", "power", "privileges", and "stereotypes", in particular related to masculinities or manhood.

   For example:

   > *"Fully engage men and boys as strategic partners and allies in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by designing and implementing national policies and programmes that address the roles and responsibilities of men and boys, including the equal sharing of responsibilities in caregiving and domestic work, and encourage men and boys to engage fully, as agents and beneficiaries of change, with the aim of eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in both the public and private spheres, by understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality, such as unequal power relations, gender stereotypes and negative social norms that view women and girls as subordinate to men and boys, as a contribution to women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work" (CSW 61 agreed conclusions, paragraph 40bb)*

2. It is suggested that interventions include the relational aspects of gender, and position the engagement of men and boys as one strategy, amongst many in the full realization of gender equality, with interventions promoting the rights of women and girls and the rights of women and men to experience the full spectrum of gender identity, as others. In this sense, strategies, programs, education, policy reforms and campaigns targeted towards the engagement of men and boys, are contextualized within the broader women's rights and gender justice movement.

   For engagement of men and boys to be successful in contributing to women's rights and gender justice for all, implementation and monitoring are required. This requires allocating adequate resources, without taking away resources for working with women and girls.

   We call for research into promising practices that challenge the harmful gender stereotypes and negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours that underlie and perpetuate such violence. Including lessons learned about transforming violent masculinities and engaging men and boys to prevent and combat violence and discrimination against women and girls is essential to efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against them.

3. It is suggested the implementation of comprehensive education in order to influence gender socialization in boys and girls. Formal education and school-settings are an opportunity to counter stereotypes from an early age and instill values of gender equality and human rights. This requires clear parameters for design and implementation, including curricula and training of teachers.

   We find a strong anchor for this approach in the Sustainable Development Goals:

   > "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship

and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (SDG Goal 4.7).

4. It is suggested that interventions carefully consider the usage of the terminology 'men and boys as agents and *beneficiaries* of change', taking into account the sensitive nature of the wording and the necessity to appropriately frame this terminology to avoid misuse and/or excessive repetition. It is suggested that men and boys are instead referred to as allies along women and girls.

5. It is suggested that the recognition of the roles of civil society groups and organizations, such as feminist groups and youth groups. Noting that UN Women's HeForShe, while informed by CSO examples and in some contexts implemented by CSOs, is a UN-agency initiative. If specific initiatives are to be named, we suggest those that are CSO-led, such as MenEngage Alliance (700+ CSO and NGO members worldwide across six regional networks and 34 country networks), White Ribbon Campaign (a global movement of men and boys working to end male violence against women and girls, implemented in over 60 countries across five continents) and the MenCare Campaign (a global fatherhood campaign active in more than 40 countries on five continents).

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Joint written statement* submitted by the Agence pour les droits de l'homme, the Islamic Human Rights Commission, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[02 June 2017]

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Please recycle

Human rights situation in Nigeria*

Condemning the continued repression of the Shia minority in Nigeria and call for urgent action to release Sheikh Zakzaky

Since the violent repression of religious minority by the military in December 2015, human rights activists have repeatedly emphasized the need for the Nigerian government to respect the principles of human rights and freedom for its minority citizens, and in particular of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky, whom the authorities have kept incommunicado without charges. These calls by various state and non-state actors, local and international groups, as well as several Rights organizations unfortunately have fallen on deaf ears thus far. The minority Shia community continue to face the most severe forms of officially sanctioned repression characterized by arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, denial of access to legal and health services, forced evictions and unlawful demolitions of their properties. Nigerian authorities continue to disregard and disrespect court orders compelling them to release the Sheikh. The religious minorities in general and the Shia minority in particular, is an endangered group in the country.

Several groups including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Islamic Human Rights Commission have all recently issued statements calling on the Nigerian authorities to end the crackdown on the country's Islamic movement and free the leader of this movement.

More than eighteen months since the wave of the repression against the Shias in Nigeria began; Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky and his wife are among several hundred persons still being detained by the authorities. Many hundred others remain either killed and buried in mass graves (by official government confessions), or are missing without trace with their fate still unknown. There is still no clear response from the government of Nigeria on the mass graves or the fate of many hundreds of these forced disappearances.

The role of the Nigerian armed forces, particularly the army, and subsequently the police as well in these violent actions against religious minorities in Zaria, Kaduna, Kano, Jos, Katsina, and Abuja raises serious questions about Nigeria's commitment to its human rights obligations. Unfortunately, these continued violent suppressions of religious minority groups; particularly Shias and the total disobedience of judgements by competent courts seeking to enforce their fundamental rights have remained totally unpunished. This is a firm evidence of Nigerian government's unwillingness to dispense justice and a blatant disregard for rule of law.

Nigerian government has currently banned the activities of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria. Even when members of the minority stage peaceful demonstrations calling for the release of their leader, Sheikh Zakzaky, combined forces of military and police have more than often forcibly dispersed them in clear violation of their rights to peaceful protests. Despite the numerous campaigns for the release of their Leader and the numerous demands to respect their rights by groups and organizations as well as through court pronouncements, instances of human rights violations and repression remain unabated, while government deliberately refuse to heed these calls.

In the light of the above therefore, Human Rights Agency and the coalition of Human Rights groups and other civil society organizations from across Nigeria and Worldwide, are strongly opposed to the continued illegal detention of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky and all other prisoners of faith, and condemn it strongly.

We urge the United Nations to take very serious measures to stop the continued crackdown on Shias and all other religious minorities in Nigeria, to forestall the possible occurrence of genocide.

Human Rights Agency and the coalition of Human Rights groups and other civil society organizations from across Nigeria and Worldwide, ask the UN to urgently study the issue of religious minorities, including Shia and Christian

minorities in Nigeria, and compel the government to respect minority rights and obey its courts' judgements with regards to their rights.

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*Strategic Empowerment and Mediation Agency, Centrum Initiative For Development And Fundamental Rights Advocacy (CEDRA), Islamic Initiative for Human Rights Protection, (IIHRP), Imam Mahdi Foundation For Global Peace, Shuhada Foundation, Islamic Medical Association Initiative (ISMA), Islamic Human Rights Commission, Socio Economic and Accountability, Al-Wahdal Islamiyya Foundation, Christian-Muslim Alternative To Conflict, National Tranquility Movement (NTM), NGOs without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by Amnesty International, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

The UN Human Rights Council must urge states to take a gender-sensitive approach to combatting arbitrary killings[1]

Amnesty International welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, which emphasizes the need for States, the United Nations and civil societies to take a gender-sensitive approach to combatting arbitrary killings and realizing the right to life.

Studies indicate that violations of women's rights, including in relation to gender-based killings, have historically been less visible in the international human rights treaty system such as through complaints before treaty bodies. Continued efforts are required to ensure human rights standards and mechanisms, including those related to the right to life, are equally responsive to the violations that women face. Special effort must likewise be taken to ensure the experience of LGBTI people are addressed.

In line with the Special Rapporteur's findings, Amnesty International re-affirms four essential elements of a gender-sensitive approach to combatting arbitrary killings and realizing the right to life, which require particular attention.

A gender-sensitive approach must address gender-based killings by both State and non-state actors

Women and LGBTI people continue to be targeted for killings by state actors, including for transgression of gender-norms or because of their sexual orientation.

However, as noted by the Special Rapporteur, studies estimate that almost half of the global homicides of women are carried out by intimate partners or family members. So called "honour" crimes, typically carried out by family members, disproportionately target women and LGBTI people.

Amnesty International has also documented patterns of killings and attacks of women and LGBTI people by armed actors and criminal gangs motivated by discriminatory attitudes and/or a climate of impunity for such acts.

States' obligations to act with due diligence to protect individuals from violence by non-state actors are well established in human rights law. Loss of life resulting from the failure to comply with those obligations may constitute arbitrary deprivation of life.

States must take preventive measures to protect life, including by adopting the necessary laws and practices to prohibit gender-based killings. To be effective, relevant laws should also be accompanied with a range of broader measures such as training for police, prosecutors and judiciary; protection and support for potential victims, and awareness raising about their rights and the law.

Crucially, as highlighted by the Special Rapporteur, States must also address the root causes of gender-based violence. Amnesty International has consistently documented that negative gender stereotypes, economic, social and cultural marginalization, and other forms of disempowerment and exclusion, increase women and LGBTI people's risk of being unlawfully killed.

Firearms are the principal mechanism of intimate partner homicide in countries with high rates of firearm ownership. USA focused studies indicate that the presence of a firearm in the home increases the risk of women being killed by intimate partners. Efforts to prevent intimate partner homicides should therefore include the adoption of strict laws and practices to prohibit access to firearms in situations where there is a risk of intimate partner violence.

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1 A fully footnoted version is available at https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/6394/2017/en/

States are required to take all preventive operational measures that can be reasonably expected of them to protect an individual whose life is at risk. In addition to their obligations in relation to individual cases, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has required that, where a State becomes aware of a pattern of violence against women, it must adopt a "general policy" to address it.

States must bring all those suspected of criminal responsibility for gender-based crimes to justice in fair trials without recourse to death penalty. In addition, providing for universal jurisdiction, as pointed out by the Special Rapporteur, is also an important tools that states should enact and enforce.

A gender-sensitive approach must embrace the links between the right to life and socio-economic rights

Regional human rights courts and UN human rights treaty bodies have recognized that insufficient availability or accessibility of economic and social goods, such as health care or food, may constitute a violation of the right to life where affected individuals lives are put at risk.

The importance of these connections in promoting a gender-sensitive approach to the right to life is evident for example in studies of mortality patterns during armed conflicts. While men are more likely to die as a result of violence during hostilities, women are more likely to die as a result of socio-economic factors such as infectious diseases, malnutrition and maternal mortality. A more expansive view of the right to life is essential to capture the experiences most relevant to women.

Amnesty International has documented how women face numerous barriers accessing maternal healthcare, contributing to high rates of maternal mortality in a number of country contexts. The organization has likewise documented how barriers to other forms of lifesaving healthcare may disproportionately affect women.

The criminalization of abortion compels women and girls to undergo illegal abortions and as such many die as a result of clandestine and unsafe abortions. Women and girls may also be denied access to health care for serious medical conditions on the grounds that treatment may damage the foetus. Amnesty International welcomes the Special Rapporteur's consideration of the issue of death resulting from deliberate denial of access to life-saving medical care because of an absolute legal ban on abortion, as an arbitrary killing.

A gender-sensitive approach must be intersectional

As noted by the Special Rapporteur, additional forms of discrimination strongly affect or compound the violations women or LGBTI people face, including on the basis of race, indigenous and minority status. This must be recognized and addressed in policy-making.

Homicide rates are often higher for women who experience intersectional discrimination. Amnesty International has documented how indigenous women are pushed deeper into unsafe living and working environments, and are targeted particularly because of racist or sexist attitudes, or higher levels of impunity for such crimes. It has also documented how LGBTI individuals face intersectional discrimination, including on the basis of socio-economic status, that affects their ability to protect themselves from homophobic violence.

People facing gender and other intersectional forms of discrimination, especially on the basis of migrant status, and race, may also fear deportation, arrest or violence by State authorities, including the police.

Intersectional forms of discrimination may also undermine women's access to healthcare, resulting in significantly higher mortality rates for affected women. Affected women may for example face discriminatory attitudes, and linguistic or cultural barriers, and be more likely to struggle to afford any costs involved in obtaining medical treatment.

A gender-sensitive approach must recognize secondary victimization

As noted by the Special Rapporteur, women are particularly affected by the extrajudicial killing of their partners and other family members. Amnesty International has documented how women are frequently left to confront the associated stigma, fear, insecurity and economic deprivation, in addition to the burdens of seeking justice.

Human rights treaty bodies and regional courts are increasingly recognizing that in certain circumstances where individuals have suffered mental harm as a result of the enforced disappearance of family members, or forced to watch family members being tortured there is a violation of the prohibition on torture and ill-treatment. The harm experienced by individuals with close bonds to other victims of right to life violations must be systematically recognized and redressed.

Recommendations to the thirty-fifth regular session of the Human Rights Council

Amnesty International recommends that the Human Rights Council:

- Calls upon States to implement the recommendations in the report of the Special Rapporteur so as to ensure a gender-sensitive approach to their efforts to combat arbitrary killings and realize the right to life
- Calls upon States to ensure that they take a gender sensitive approach in their reporting to human rights mechanisms, including in relation to reporting on right to life violations, and engage with and support organizations addressing gender-based violations of the right to life
- Calls upon UN bodies and civil societies to uphold and reaffirm the principles listed above and in the Special Rapporteur's report in their standard setting and decision-making.